

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 7, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express our serious concern with the Obama Administration's payment of \$1.7 billion to the Iranian regime – a U.S. designated State Sponsor of Terrorism. As this payment was announced on the same day, January 17, 2016, when Iran released five innocent Americans in exchange for pardoning or dropping charges against 21 Iranians implicated in serious criminal activity, we are concerned that this may only further incentivize Iran's malicious behavior. The Administration's decision to conduct the negotiations that led to this payment in secret and not to brief Members of Congress in advance of its announcement only adds to our concern, especially as it relates to the nature of Iran's claim regarding undelivered military sales and the use of U.S. taxpayer dollars. We note that the Foreign Affairs Committee has made a detailed request for information from you on this important and serious matter.

Indeed, a General in Iran's radical Basij militia claimed that "taking this much money back was in return for the release of the American spies." While all Americans are overjoyed that our fellow citizens are home with their families, this payment of well over a billion dollars to a rogue regime will certainly encourage radicals in Tehran and elsewhere to take more Americans hostage. More importantly, we believe that Iran should pay American victims of Iranian terror who still have outstanding judgments against the regime, not be rewarded with American taxpayer dollars for a dubious claim.

Mr. Secretary, not only do we dispute the validity of Iran's claims to this money, this \$1.7 billion payment came only a day after "implementation day" of the Iran nuclear deal, when the United States and its negotiating partners provided Iran with significant sanctions relief. In presenting the nuclear deal to Congress, you testified to the House Foreign Affairs Committee that "we will continue to push back against Iran on every front available" for its support for terrorism and other destabilizing activities. It is difficult to see how paying Iran \$1.7 billion to settle a dispute caused by Iran's belligerence upholds that testimony. In reality, Iran's destabilizing behavior has only grown since the nuclear deal was reached. In that time, the Iranian regime has tested two ballistic missiles, fired rockets near a U.S. aircraft carrier, continues to disrupt the region with arms shipments, and briefly detained a dozen U.S. sailors, among many other serious acts of aggression. These are in addition to Iran's ongoing attempts to undermine U.S. interests in the Middle East by supporting Hezbollah and other terrorist proxies that threaten our ally Israel while propping up the murderous Assad regime in Syria.

As you recently acknowledged, Iran will use some of the funds it receives in sanctions relief to support terrorism. We can only assume that Iran will use this second influx of cash in a similarly

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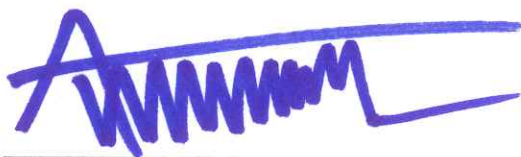
Page 2

destructive manner. It is our fear that in choosing to settle this dispute, and in reversing 35 years of standing U.S. policy as it relates to this case, the United States is treating Iran as if it were a responsible international actor and not the world's leading sponsor of terrorism. Continuing to do so will only embolden the radicals in Tehran, putting U.S. interests, our allies, and innocent Americans at greater risk.

It is our firm request that the Obama Administration cooperate with Congressional inquiries regarding this matter as well as provide all relevant documentation regarding this case.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



TED POE
Member of Congress



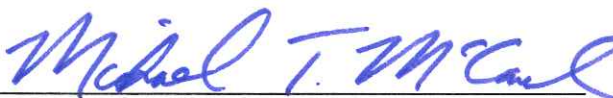
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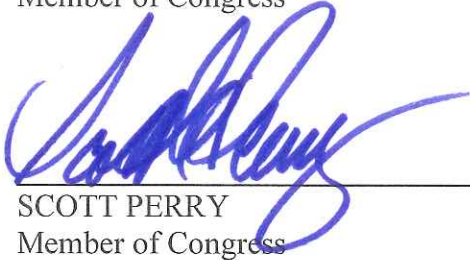
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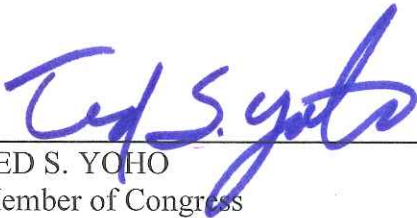
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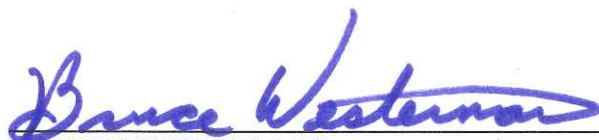
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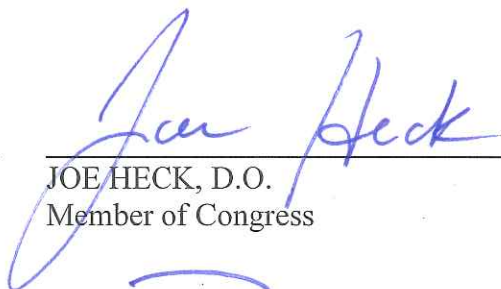


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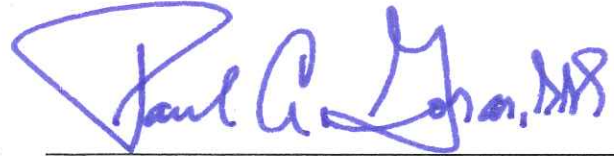


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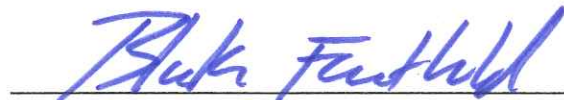
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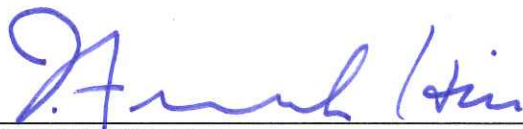
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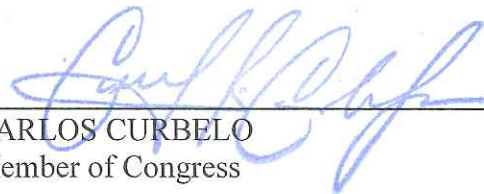
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The Honorable John F. Kerry

March 2016

Page 7



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